

WE CLAIM:

1. A wall fastener for use between a stud wall and a mounting track, and configured to support first and second wall cladding material members relative to each other to provide a continuous wall cladding material structure between the stud wall and the mounting track, the mounting track having side walls with an inside surface and an outside surface, the fastener comprising:

a first portion having first and second opposed primary surfaces and first and second sides, the first portion being secured to the mounting track with the first primary surface facing the mounting track and the second primary surface facing the first wall cladding material member;

a second portion having a third primary surface that extends parallel to the first portion and is offset from the second primary surface a predetermined distance, the second portion being secured to the second wall cladding material member with the third primary surface facing the second wall cladding material member thereby supporting the second wall cladding material member in engagement with the first wall cladding material member; and

a first fastening structure secured to the first side of the first portion, the first fastening structure slidably engaging the stud wall thereby retaining the wall fastener to the stud wall while providing sliding movement of the wall fastener relative to the stud wall.

2. The wall fastener of claim 1, wherein the first wall cladding material member is secured to the stud wall and not secured to the wall fastener, and the second wall cladding material member is secured only to the second portion.

3. The wall fastener of claim 2, wherein the primary wall member is secured to the plurality of studs, and the first portion is movably positioned between the primary wall member and one of the studs.

4. The wall fastener of claim 1, wherein the secondary wall member is secured to the second portion so as to be overlapping with the primary wall member and movable relative to the primary wall member.

5. The wall fastener of claim 1, wherein the first portion includes an aperture formed therein, the aperture being sized to receive a fastener for securing the first portion to the mounting track.

6. The wall fastener of claim 2, wherein the first fastening structure includes a wrap around structure configured to engage a flange of the stud.

7. The wall fastener of claim 1, further comprising a second fastening structure secured to the second side of the first portion, the second fastening structure being configured to slidably engage the stud wall thereby retaining the wall fastener to the stud wall while providing sliding movement of the wall fastener relative to the wall.

8. The wall fastener of claim 7, wherein the stud wall includes a stud that includes first and second sides, and the first fastening structure is configured to engage the first side of the stud and the second fastening structure is configured to engage the second side of the stud.

9. The wall fastener of claim 7, wherein the stud wall includes a stud having a thickness measured in a direction perpendicular to a plane defined by the first primary surface, and the first portion of the fastener has a width greater than the thickness of the stud, whereby the first portion is secured to the mounting track at a location on the first portion offset from alignment with the stud.

10. The wall fastener of claim 1, further comprising a third portion extending between the first and second portions to secure the first and second portions together.

11. The wall fastener of claim 10, further comprising a fourth portion secured to the second portion and extending from the second portion toward the first portion, the fourth portion including a surface that extends in the same plane as the first surface.

12. The wall fastener of claim 1, wherein the wall fastener comprises a single unitary piece of material.

13. The wall fastener of claim 1, wherein the first portion further includes a first track retaining member for engaging the inside surface and the outside surface of mounting track.

14. A method of retaining a stud wall to a mounting track with a fastener such that the mounting track is vertically movable relative to the stud wall, the fastener including a first portion having a first primary surface and first and second sides, and a fastening structure extending from the first side of the first portion, the method comprising the steps of:

securing the first portion to the mounting track with the first primary surface facing the mounting track; and

slidingly securing the fastening structure to the stud wall thereby retaining the stud wall to the mounting track so as to prevent lateral movement of the fastener relative to the stud wall while permitting vertical movement of the fastener relative to the stud wall.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the stud wall includes a stud and a primary wall member secured to the stud, and the method further comprises the step of positioning the first portion between the stud and the primary wall member.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the fastener further includes a second portion defining a second primary surface that extends parallel to the first primary surface and is offset from the first portion, and the method further comprises the step of

securing a secondary wall member to the second primary surface of the second portion so as to overlap the secondary wall member with the primary wall surface.

17. A method of forming a wall fastener from a single piece of material, the wall fastener being configured to retain a stud wall to a mounting track and to support a secondary wall structure in engagement with a primary wall structure of the stud wall, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a first portion that includes first and second opposed primary surfaces and first and second sides, the first portion being configured to be secured to the mounting track with the first primary surface facing the mounting track and the second primary surface facing the primary wall structure;

forming a second portion that includes a third primary surface that extends parallel to the first primary surface and is configured to be secured to the secondary wall structure, and positioning the secondary wall structure adjacent to the primary wall structure;

forming a third portion that extends between the first and second portions; and

forming a first fastener structure along the first side of the first portion, the first fastener structure being configured to engage a stud of the stud wall to retain the wall fastener to the stud wall while permitting vertical movement of the wall fastener relative to the wall.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of forming the third portion includes bending the third portion into an orientation substantially perpendicular to the first portion.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the step of forming the first fastener structure includes forming a track structure sized to receive a flange of the one stud, the track providing sliding engagement between the fastener and the stud wall.

20. A wall fastener configured to be secured to a mounting track and to support a secondary wall member adjacent to a primary wall member, the wall fastener comprising:

a first portion having first and second opposed primary surfaces, the first primary surface defining a first portion plane, the first portion configured to be secured to the mounting track with the first primary surface facing the mounting track and the second primary surface facing the primary wall member;

a second portion spaced apart from the first portion a predetermined distance and having third and fourth surfaces that extend parallel to the first surface, the second portion being configured to be secured to the secondary wall member with the third primary surface facing the secondary wall member and the fourth primary surface facing the first portion plane;

a third portion extending between the first and second portions to secure the first and second portions together; and

a fourth portion extending from the second portion in a direction toward the first portion plane and configured to contact the mounting track.

21. The wall fastener of claim 20, wherein the fourth portion includes a contact member extending in a direction parallel to the first portion plane and configured to contact the mounting track.

22. The wall fastener of claim 20, wherein the predetermined distance is defined by a thickness of the primary wall structure.

23. The wall fastener of claim 20, wherein the first, second, third and fourth portions are a single unitary piece.

24. A wall fastener configured to retain a stud wall to a mounting track, the stud wall including a plurality of studs and a primary wall member secured to the plurality of studs, the wall fastener comprising:

a first portion having first and second primary surfaces and first and second sides, the first portion being secured to the mounting track and being positioned between one of the plurality of studs and the primary wall structure with the first primary surface facing the mounting track and the one stud, and the second primary surface facing the primary wall structure; and

a first fastening structure extending from the first side of the first portion and configured to retain the fastener to the one stud while providing sliding movement of the fastener relative to the one stud to provide vertical movement of the mounting track relative to the stud wall.

25. The wall fastener of claim 20, further comprising a second fastening structure extending from the second side of the first portion and configured to retain the fastener to the one stud while providing sliding movement of the fastener relative to the stud so as to provide vertical movement of the mounting track relative to the stud wall.

26. The wall fastener of claim 20, wherein the stud wall includes a stud having a thickness measured in a direction perpendicular to a plane defined by the first primary surface, and the first portion of the fastener has a width greater than the thickness of the stud, whereby the first portion is secured to the mounting track at a location on the first portion offset from alignment with the stud.

27. The wall fastener of claim 20, wherein the stud wall has opposing first and second sides, and the first fastening structure is configured to retain the fastener to the one stud when the fastener is being used on the first side of the stud wall, and the second fastening structure is configured to retain the fastener to the one stud when the fastener is being used on the second side of the stud wall.

28. The wall fastener of claim 20, wherein the first fastening structure includes a track sized to engage a flange of the one stud, the track providing sliding engagement between the flange and the track.

29. A wall fastener for use to secure a stud wall to a mounting track, the fastener comprising:

a first portion having first and second opposed primary surfaces and first and second sides, the first portion being secured to the first side wall of mounting track with the first primary surface facing the outside surface of the first side wall and the second primary surface facing the first wall cladding material member, the first portion having a first track retaining member configured to engage the inside surface of the first side wall.

30. The wall fastener of claim 29, further comprising a second portion having a third primary surface that extends parallel to the first primary surface and is offset from the first primary surface a predetermined distance, the second portion being secured to the second wall cladding material member with the third primary surface facing the second wall cladding material member thereby supporting the second wall cladding material member in engagement with the first wall cladding material member.

31. The wall fastener of claim 28, further comprising a first fastening structure secured to the first side of the first portion, the first fastening structure slidably engaging the stud wall thereby retaining the wall fastener to the stud wall while providing sliding movement of the wall fastener relative to the wall32. The wall fastener of claim 28, wherein the first portion includes an aperture formed therein, the aperture being sized to receive a fastener for securing the first portion to the mounting track.